
We closed our study last week with Paul's statement: 2

Corinthians 2:17:

We are sincere in our ministry toward you, conscious of the fact that God is looking on, overseeing our ministry; we preach and minister in the sight of God, knowing that we are under His inspection and watchful eye; we speak "IN CHRIST", or, as men who are united to Christ, This in stark contrast to the false teachers in Corinth, Judaizers, who corrupted the gospel of Christ; (Acts 18) tells us, that after Paul had preached in their synagogue and testified that Jesus was Christ, these "gospel resistant" Jews assaulted Paul, those that believed on Christ, and brought them before Gallio's judgment seat. (Acts 18:4-7)

When the Spirit of God began to do His work and save many Corinthians, and to deliver them from the power of darkness, Satan threw a temper tantrum...and mustered the unbelieving Jews to assault Paul and all those who had believed Christ.

Their charge: "This fellow is persuading men to worship God contrary to the law"; they refused Him whom Moses prophesied of!

In answer to their charge, Gallio said, "I will be no judge in matters of your law", and he drove them from his judgment seat. These Judaizers, were the ones who were corrupting the Word of God, of whom Paul spoke of at the end of 2 Corinthians 2:17.

Beloved of God, this is a great danger in our day, of the enemies of Christ adulterating, mixing, or watering down the gospel with human orthodoxy, works, or their own traditions and opinions. Jude 1:3-4.

The Lord Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees who held their traditions to be above the commandments of God:

Matthew 15:1-3, 2 Corinthians 11:1-4, 13-15

Because of these false teachers (Judaizers) that had infiltrated the church, Paul (C3) set before the Corinthians "CONTRASTS" between the Law of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, between that which was glorious and that which exceeded in glory, between that which was written (outwardly) on tables of stone, and that which is written (inwardly) upon hearts!

But first, we begin 2 Corinthians 3:1, with Paul answering those, who, in all probability, had accused him of commending himself...

AGAIN:

We don't need to commend ourselves for our work in the gospel ministry.

What the Spirit of God has done IN YOUR HEARTS is the strongest of COMMENDATIONS that we are INDEED doing the work of God!

We don't need letters of commendation (as some others) recommending us to you, and we don't need letters from you,

commending us and our ministry to other churches. 2
Corinthians 3:2-3

You are our epistle; YOU are our letter of recommendation!
YOUR faith in Christ and YOUR Christian lives are KNOWN AND
READ of all men!

THAT is the affirmation of the authenticity of OUR WORK;
THAT God has saved you from your sins! NOW, your lives are
KNOWN and READ of all who knew you when you were lost, and
dead in your trespasses and sins, and who now know you in
Christ!

YOUR LIVES are the strongest proof that Christ is
ministered by us!

This brings us to the false teachers who were active in the
church @ Corinth:

From what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3, we understand that
these false teachers were primarily Judaizers, who
vehemently opposed the gospel of Christ, WHICH IS WHY Paul
set before the church several contrasts of how the gospel of
Christ far excelled the law of Moses.

Paul described BOTH the law and the gospel by their effects
or what they produced in fallen humanity. The first
CONTRAST 2 Corinthians 3:3:

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared (by your
faith in Christ) to be the epistle of Christ
ministered by us, WRITTEN NOT WITH INK, but with the
Spirit of the living God, NOT in tables of stone,
(like the law), but in fleshy tables of the heart"

YOUR SALVATION (Corinthian believers) was supernatural! Men
write gospel truths on papyrus paper with pen and ink, but
those words may be lost, fade away with time, or (more to
the point) be disobeyed.

God, with His finger wrote the commandments on tables of
stone and delivered them to Moses for the children of Israel
to obey, but their hearts were cold, hard, and lifeless,
like the stones that they were written on.

But when God saves a sinner, the Spirit of God WRITES His
Word and His law upon "the heart" of THAT SINNER TURNED
SAINT; when God does this supernatural work in the heart,
the effect is love and obedience to God!

Jeremiah prophesied of the new covenant! Jeremiah
31:31-34

2 Corinthians 3:4-5: We do not trust in our own capabilities or
our own resourcefulness for the ministry of Christ; our trust,
our confidence, and our sufficiency is of God.

May we never forget this here at Grace Fellowship Baptist
Church! Whatever gifts or capabilities that you have, KNOW
that your gifts and abilities were given to you by God to
use for His honor and glory!

If you stop and consider the gravity of ministering the
gospel of Christ to never-dying human souls, it'll make you
shudder with fear!

God, saith Paul, called us to the gospel ministry, God enabled us and made us capable, sufficient for this work! (V6): "God hath made us able ministers of the New Testament" ...

2 Corinthians 3:6B: NOT of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life!

The LETTER or LAW was written on tables of stone, it is external and demanded/demands obedience, because it is God's law; it was written a covenant of works! But in the New Covenant, the Spirit does His work supernaturally, inwardly upon the heart! Cf. Jeremiah 31.

The law says, "do this and live"; but we do not have the capability of obeying the letter of law, that is why Paul wrote:

"For the letter killeth". Luke 10:25-29, 36-37 (Good Samaritan)

This lawyer was not capable of DOING what the law and the Lord Jesus, (WHO BTW IS) the lawgiver, DEMANDED of him! None of us are able! But what is worse? We all want to JUSTIFY ourselves as good when there is NONE GOOD, NO, NOT ONE! Just like this lawyer, who tried to JUSTIFY HIMSELF to the Lord Jesus! Never forget that the design of the law was to kill, condemn, reveal sin! Romans 7:7-13, Galatians 3:10-14, 21-25

Paul goes on to write, God DID NOT make us able ministers of the OT or OC, but of the NT, we don't preach a message of death, but of eternal life!

2 Corinthians 3:7-11: The law is the ministration of death and condemnation; the gospel is the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness! (V7-11)

The giving of the law was glorious! When God descended upon the mount, it shook, there were lightnings and thunderings; the people of Israel were warned to NOT TOUCH the mountain when the law was being given to Moses. Exodus 19:12-13 Moses' face had to be covered for a time after he descended from the mount, after he received the commandments. But as glorious as that was, it faded, as glorious as it was, the effect of the law is that it condemns, kills, finds out our sin and our guilt! THAT is why it is called the ministration of death! I think (HERE) of the words of the hymn, "The Hiding Place"

Indignant justice stood in view, TO Sinai's fiery mount I flew, but justice cried with frowning face, THIS MOUNTAIN is no hiding place!

The gospel of Jesus Christ EXCEEDS and EXCELS the glory of the law or the shining, but veiled face of Moses in that it clearly and plainly reveals the way of life and salvation to sinful souls...

2 Corinthians 4:3-7

In contrast, the law demands perfect obedience, but where there is one sin against God, one breach in any commandment

of God's holy law, there is guilt, condemnations, and the demands for justice and punishment!

Moses' face was veiled, but NOT the face of Christ; Moses' face ceased to shine, but NOT the face of Christ! The law was done away with, BUT NOT the gospel, it remains. The gospel is not hidden and veiled like the law!

2 Corinthians 3:12-13

We use great plainness of speech; NOT AS MOSES, who had to cover his face and conceal himself; BUT nothing is hidden or veiled in the gospel; it PLAINLY and OPENLY reveals Jesus Christ to both Jews and Gentiles, and the true way of salvation

Those who are still under the OC and the works of the law are spiritually blinded: 2 Corinthians 3:14-16

As long as the Jews refused to TURN from the works of the law, and from their sins to faith in Christ, their hearts remained blind to the truth, veiled in the OT from seeing and understanding the true way of salvation, revealed in the New Covenant!

THIS is what the false teachers are spreading in Corinth!

It's amazing to consider, that even today, MOST sinners that you come in contact with THINK to themselves to attain heaven by their good works...No different than the unbelieving Jews of Paul's time.

Galatians 2:16